



U.S. Department of Justice  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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## FINAL INDIVIDUAL SENTENCED IN COUNTERFEIT CHECK SCHEME

KANSAS CITY, Kan. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced that **Derek Mayfield**, 32, Kansas City, Missouri, was sentenced on March 8, 2004, by U.S. District Judge G. Thomas VanBebber to **twelve months and one day in federal prison, without parole, to be followed by two years of supervised release and ordered to pay \$2,155 in restitution.**

Mayfield was the last of seven persons indicted in a metro-wide check counterfeiting ring to be sentenced by Judge VanBebber.

Melgren said that **Mayfield** entered a guilty plea to one count of aiding and abetting in the possession and passing of a counterfeit check. Mayfield admitted at his plea that he provided Michael Clemmons a \$2,155.00 counterfeit check purportedly issued by the Jewish Community Campus of Kansas City and that on November 27, 2002, Clemmons cashed the counterfeit check at Hillcrest Bank, Olathe, Kansas.

Melgren stated that **Mayfield**, along with **William Cunningham**, 30, Kansas City, Missouri, **Joseph Flowers**, 29, Kansas City, Kansas, **Vernell Murphy**, 54, Kansas City, Missouri, **Michael Clemmons**, 31, Kansas City, Missouri, and **Yixin Zhu**, 43, Kansas City, Missouri, each entered guilty pleas on September 23, 2003. **James Hughes**, 23, Kansas City, Missouri, entered a guilty plea on October 1, 2003.

Melgren said that this was an eight month investigation by the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department, the Overland Park Police Department, and the Olathe Police Department, with the assistance of the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service into a counterfeit check scheme that was operating in Kansas and Missouri that resulted in a loss of approximately \$378,000. The following police departments in Kansas and Missouri also assisted in this investigation: Prairie Village, Kansas City, Kansas, Shawnee, Topeka, Lawrence, Blue Springs, Gladstone, Grandview, Independence, Lee's Summit, North Kansas City, and Raytown.

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**William Cunningham** was sentenced on January 5, 2004, to **57 months in federal prison, without parole, to be followed by two years of supervised release and ordered to pay \$5,550.50 in restitution to the Bank of Blue Valley, Olathe, Kansas.** Cunningham entered a guilty plea to one count of aiding and abetting in the possession and passing of a counterfeit check. Cunningham admitted at his plea that he printed a counterfeit check on his computer which was purportedly issued by Trac-Excel, a business in Overland Park, Kansas, and that on December 13, 2002, Vernell Murphy cashed that \$5,550.50 counterfeit check at the Bank of Blue Valley in Olathe, Kansas.

**James Hughes** was sentenced on January 12, 2004, to **30 months in federal prison, without parole, to be followed by three years of supervised release and ordered to pay \$4,250 in restitution.** Hughes entered a guilty plea to one count of aiding and abetting the possession and passing of a counterfeit check. Hughes admitted at his plea that he provided Yixin Zhu a counterfeit check purportedly issued by the Kansas City Country Club, which Zhu cashed at Missouri Bank & Trust in Prairie Village, Kansas, on November 26, 2002.

**Yixin Zhu** was sentenced on December 15, 2003, to **three years probation, to include four months in a halfway house, and ordered to pay \$5,500 in restitution.** Zhu entered a guilty plea to one count of aiding and abetting the possession and passing of a counterfeit check. Zhu admitted at his plea that on December 7, 2002, he cashed a counterfeit check for \$5,500 purportedly issued by Alvamar at the Emprise Bank, Lawrence, Kansas.

**Joseph Flowers** was sentenced on January 12, 2004, to **27 months in federal prison, without parole, to be followed by two years of supervised release.** Flowers entered a guilty plea to one count of aiding and abetting another in the possession and passing of a counterfeit check. Flowers admitted that on January 7, 2003, he drove another individual to the Columbian Bank & Trust Company in Topeka, Kansas, and waited in the car for her to cash a counterfeit check for \$5,000 that was purportedly issued by Columbian Title of Kansas City.

**Michael Clemmons** was sentenced on January 26, 2004, to **twelve months in federal prison, without parole, to be followed by three years supervised release and ordered to pay \$50,840.14 in restitution.** Clemmons entered a guilty plea to one count of conspiracy to possess and pass counterfeit checks. Clemmons admitted at his plea that on November 27, 2002, he cashed a counterfeit check for \$2,155 purportedly issued by the Jewish Community Campus of Kansas City at the Hillcrest Bank, Olathe, Kansas.

**Vernell Murphy** was sentenced on December 15, 2003, to **three years probation, to include six months of home detention, and ordered to pay \$3,350.75 in restitution.** Murphy entered a guilty plea to one count of aiding and abetting in the possession and passing of a counterfeit check. Murphy admitted at her plea that on November 29, 2002, she passed a counterfeit check purportedly issued by Concannon Group of Companies, Inc., Kansas City, Missouri, at the First National Bank of Kansas located in Overland Park, Kansas.

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The federal charges against an eighth defendant, Joegina Davis, were dismissed in July 2003 and she was prosecuted in Shawnee County District Court. An additional twenty people

were charged in Johnson and Wyandotte Counties in Kansas and Jackson, Clay, and Platte Counties in Missouri with passing counterfeit checks as a result of this investigation.

Melgren commended the excellent work of all the law enforcement agencies involved in this investigation and Assistant U.S. Attorney Leon Patton in this prosecution.